

Journaling with a Protector

Directions: Find a quiet moment with a part you'd like to know better — one that got activated recently, or one you're simply curious about.

If you're still activated, wait. Give yourself enough distance to bring curiosity and a little separation. This part may be a "trailhead" to something deeper — you don't have to go there today. Just getting to know the part itself is enough.

1. Choose the part to work with.

Notice how you experience it in or around your body. Maybe it's a sensation — a heavy weight in the chest. Maybe it's a personified character — a mean old man shouting at you. Maybe it's just words, whispering "you are so dumb."

2. Open your heart to this part with curiosity.

Parts often think they are you — they don't yet know they could actually have a relationship with you. Bring enough Self-energy that the part feels safe enough to show up: genuinely cared for, trusting that you don't want to change it. From that state, let it speak or write without censoring.

Pause. If other parts interfere — ones who want this part to change — acknowledge them and let them know you'll come back later. Try writing them down ("name it to tame it"). Soften any resistance, judgment, or criticism. Then return, gently, to the part you're getting to know.

3. Deepen your understanding.

Ask questions like these — and others that arise naturally. Not every question will get a clear answer. If nothing comes from the part, and you notice a thinker part stepping in, just move to another question.

- ~ When does this part show up, and what does it typically do?
- ~ Are there certain times or triggers that really upset it?
- ~ How does it believe it's helping you?
- ~ Does it know how old you are?
- ~ What is it afraid would happen if it stopped doing its job — or did the job more gently?
- ~ If it could be relieved of this role, what would it rather be doing?

Pause. A more vulnerable or wounded part might show up here — as a sensation, a feeling, a memory. We call these hidden parts exiles. If you meet one, try naming it and letting it know you see it: "Okay, five-year-old me on the stairs outside our apartment — I see you there. I know you matter." If it feels right, promise to come back and be with this part soon.

What I now understand about this part

What most surprises me about the exercise

What I most want the part to hear or know now

A commitment I'd like to offer my internal system